

Thorns in Mossflower, prologue

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Summary: As one beast dies, another's life is put at risk...

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Night was drawing in over the sandstone abbey. The sun had long since set and the fluffy pink-hued clouds had floated softly away, replaced by the glowing moon and the glittering stars. The abbey dwellers were huddled together in Cavern Hole, telling great stories of years gone past. The full moon cast shadows over the towers of Redwall, as the ancient badger guardian shooed the last of the Dibbuns to bed. "Tell us a story muvver" urged a fieldmouse babe as Mother Burget tucked her in.

"Oh yes Mother! Tell us a nice long one!" agreed the mouse's sister from the bed next door.

Burget smiled kindly. "Honestly you two, I've nearly run out of storyies to tell! You've heard practically every story I can think of, and more besides!"

Poppy, the younger of the two, screwed up her face and wrinkled her nose, deep in thought. Finally she smiled. "I know Ma Burget! You knows how all our dormantries are named after famous Redwall beasts? Well tell us the story of our dormitary, the 'Benjamin Thornton' dormitary. Was he a brave beastie Muvver?"

The huge badger closed her eyes, as if recalling times gone by.

Poppy's sister took up the chant as they begged to hear the tale.

"Holly! Poppy! Be quiet or you'll wake the other Dibbuns! I'll tell you Benjamin's tale, but it's a very long one. So hush now. Once upon

a time...

~ YEARS EARLIER

Jinkan ran for his life, tears streaming down his face and his breath coming in short, wheezing gasps. He glanced back at his persuers and at his home, his entire family trapped in the blaze. All of them, except the tiny bundle in his arms. He clung tight to his only remaining son, knowing his only hope was to get him to the Abbey. Suddenly a rough pair of hands grabbed the plump mouse. He went sprawling to the ground.

He felt a sharp pain in his shoulder as he was pinned to the ground. The same happened to his other shoulder and his foot paws. Slowly he blacked out as his persuers went about their deadly work. He cast about desperately for the bundle. He must have been hallucinating, as he saw a pale mouse clad in a green habit, watching over his son. The last think he saw was a huge, war-like creature, with a dark shape perched cawing on his shoulder.

End
file.